



## NEWS RELEASE



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**SOUTHEAST INFORMATION OFFICE: Atlanta, Ga.**

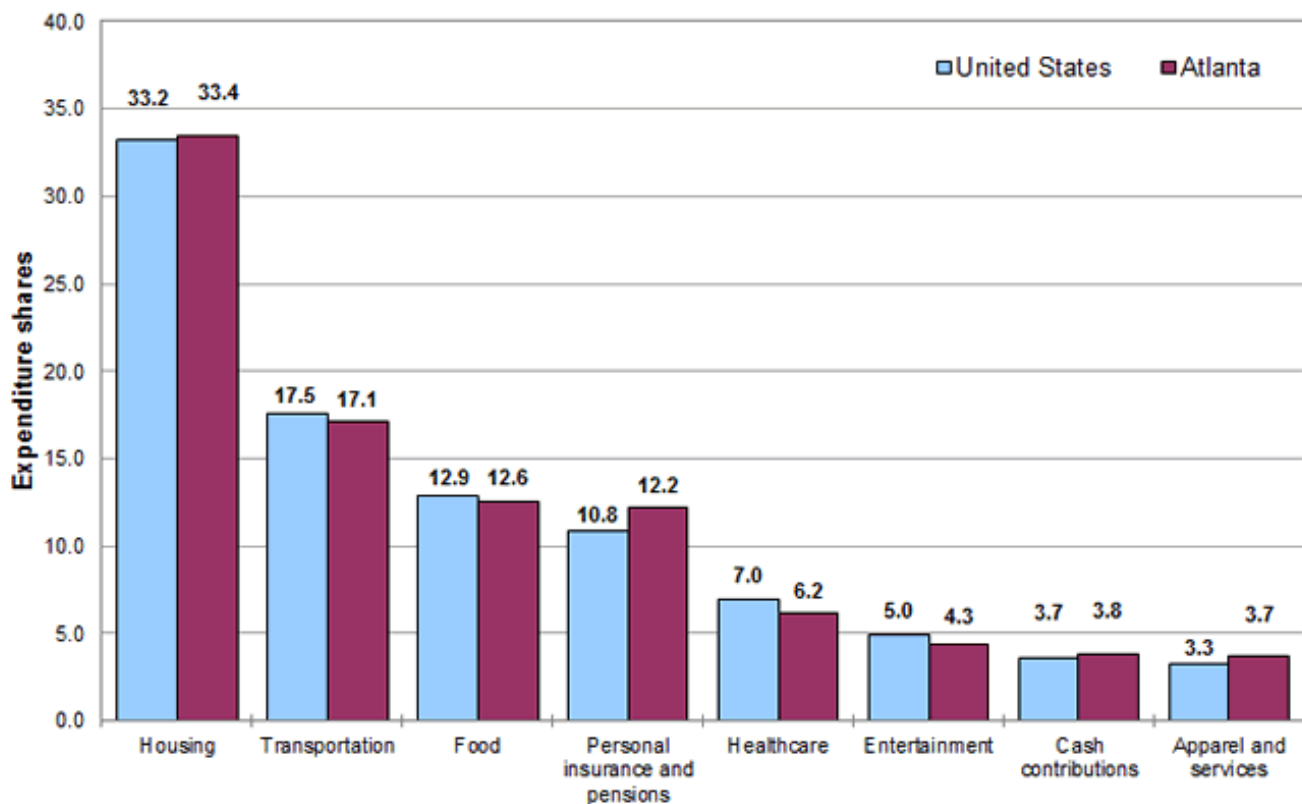
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### **Consumer Expenditures for the Atlanta Metropolitan Area: 2012-2013**

Consumer units in the Atlanta, Ga., metropolitan area spent an average of \$50,782 per year in 2012-2013, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that this figure was similar to the \$51,299 average expenditure level for a typical household in the United States. Although households in the Atlanta area spent about the same as the U.S. average, they allocated their dollars significantly different in 2 of the 8 major categories. For example, expenditures for healthcare, which accounted for 6.2 percent of a typical Atlanta household budget, were significantly lower than the national average of 7.0 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures for the eight major categories in the United States and Atlanta metropolitan area, 2012-2013**



Housing in the Atlanta metropolitan area averaged \$16,975 annually and was the largest expenditure category, accounting for 33.4 percent of an Atlanta area household's total budget, similar to the national average of 33.2 percent. (See [tables 1](#) and [2](#).) Overall, 8 of the 18 published metropolitan areas had expenditure shares for housing significantly above the U.S. average. One area, Detroit, had a share for housing that was significantly below the U.S. average. (See [chart 2](#).) Housing expenditure shares among the 18 areas ranged from 39.9 percent in Miami to 30.0 percent in Detroit. (See [table 3](#).)

The majority of housing expenditures in Atlanta went toward shelter, 57.9 percent, which includes mortgage interest, property taxes, repairs, and rent, among other items; nationwide, 58.6 percent of the housing budget was allocated to shelter. (See [table A](#).) Utilities, fuels, and public services expenses accounted for 23.5 percent of the housing budget locally; nationally, it made up 21.7 percent. The rate of home ownership in Atlanta, at 62 percent, compared to the U.S. average of 64 percent.

**Table A. Percent distribution of housing expenditures, United States and Atlanta, 2012-2013**

Category	United States	Atlanta
Total housing .....	100.0	100.0
Shelter .....	58.6	57.9
Utilities, fuels, and public services .....	21.7	23.5
Household operations .....	6.8	7.0
Housekeeping supplies .....	3.7	3.2

**Table A. Percent distribution of housing expenditures, United States and Atlanta, 2012-2013 - Continued**

Category	United States	Atlanta
Household furnishings and equipment .....	9.2	8.5

Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.

At 17.1 percent of the total budget, transportation was the second largest expenditure category in the Atlanta area, not significantly different than the national average of 17.5 percent. Among the 18 metropolitan areas nationwide, 6 had shares that were significantly below the U.S. average. Detroit and Houston had transportation shares that were measurably above the U.S. average. (See [chart 3.](#))

Of the \$8,682 in annual expenditures for transportation in Atlanta, 94.9 percent was spent buying and maintaining private vehicles; this compared to the national average of 94.0 percent. The remaining 5.1 percent of an Atlanta household's transportation budget was spent on public transit, which includes fares for taxis, buses, trains, and planes; this allocation compared to the 6.0-percent average for the nation. (See [table B.](#)) The average number of vehicles per household in Atlanta was 1.7 and the national average was 1.9.

**Table B. Percent distribution of transportation expenditures, United States and Atlanta, 2012-2013**

Category	United States	Atlanta
Transportation .....	100.0	100.0
Vehicle purchases (net outlay).....	36.0	36.8
Gasoline and motor oil.....	29.8	34.8
Other vehicle expenses .....	28.2	23.2
Public transportation .....	6.0	5.1

Note: Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The portion of an Atlanta consumer unit's budget spent on food, 12.6 percent, was similar to the 12.9-percent U.S. average. Among the 18 metropolitan areas, 12 had food expenditure shares that were not measurably different from the nationwide average. (See [table 3.](#))

Households in Atlanta spent \$3,826, or 60.0 percent, of their food dollars on food at home and the remaining 40.0 percent (\$2,548) on food prepared away from home, such as restaurant meals, carry-out, board at school, and catered affairs. In comparison, the typical U.S. household spent 59.8 percent of its food budget on food at home and 40.2 percent on food away from home.

As noted, Atlanta is 1 of 18 metropolitan areas nationwide for which Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) data are available. Metropolitan area CE data and that for the four geographic regions of the United States are available on our Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cex/tables.htm>. Metropolitan area CE news releases are available at <http://www.bls.gov/regions/subjects/consumer-spending.htm>.

### **Additional Information**

Data contained in this release are from the CE Survey, which is conducted on an ongoing basis by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The CE data in this release were averaged over a two-year period, 2012 and 2013. CE data are available for the nation, the 4 geographic regions of the country, and 18 metropolitan areas. The metropolitan area discussed in this release is Atlanta, Ga.,

which is comprised of Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton Counties in Georgia; and Cleburne County in Alabama.

The survey consists of two components, a diary or recordkeeping survey, and an interview survey. The integrated data from the BLS Diary and Interview Surveys provide a complete accounting of consumer expenditures and income, which neither survey component alone is designed to do. Due to changes in the survey sample frame, metropolitan area data in this release are not directly comparable to those prior to 1996.

A consumer unit is defined as members of a household related by blood, marriage, adoption, or other legal arrangement; a single person living alone or sharing a household with others but who is financially independent; or two or more persons living together who share responsibility for at least 2 out of 3 major types of expenses – food, housing, and other expenses. The terms household or consumer unit are used interchangeably for convenience.

CE metropolitan area estimates are not comparative cost of living surveys, as neither the quantity nor the quality of goods and services has been held constant among areas. Differences may result from variations in demographic characteristics such as consumer unit size, age, preferences, income levels, etc. However, expenditure shares, or the percentage of a consumer unit's budget spent on a particular category, can be used to compare spending patterns across areas. Sample sizes for the metropolitan areas are much smaller than for the nation, so the U.S. estimates and year-to-year changes are more reliable than those for the metropolitan areas. Users should also keep in mind that prices for many goods and services have changed since the survey was conducted.

Expenditure shares for housing and transportation that are higher or lower than the national average, after testing for significance at the 95-percent confidence interval, are also identified in charts 2 and 3 for the 18 metropolitan areas surveyed.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with our ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

For additional technical documentation and related information, see <http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch16.htm>.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202)-691-5200. Federal Relay Service: (800)-877-8339.

**Table 1. Percent distribution of average annual expenditures, United States and Atlanta, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2012-2013**

Category	United States	Atlanta
Average annual expenditures.....	\$51,299	\$50,782
Percent distribution:.....	100.0	100.0
Food.....	12.9	12.6
Alcoholic beverages.....	0.9	0.8
Housing.....	33.2	33.4
Apparel and services.....	3.3	3.7
Transportation.....	17.5	17.1
Healthcare.....	7.0	6.2*
Entertainment.....	5.0	4.3
Personal care products and services.....	1.2	1.2
Reading.....	0.2	0.2*
Education.....	2.3	3.2
Tobacco products and smoking supplies.....	0.6	0.3*
Miscellaneous.....	1.4	1.0*
Cash contributions.....	3.7	3.8
Personal insurance and pensions.....	10.8	12.2*

Note: An asterisk (\*) represents a statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level. Columns may not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 2. Consumer unit characteristics and average annual expenditures, United States and Atlanta, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2012-2013**

Category	United States	Atlanta
Consumer unit characteristics: .....		
Income before taxes .....	\$64,686	\$69,026
Age of reference person .....	50.1	48.0
Average number in consumer unit:.....		
Persons.....	2.5	2.5
Children under 18 .....	0.6	0.6
Persons 65 and over.....	0.3	0.2
Earners .....	1.3	1.3
Vehicles .....	2	1.7
Percent homeowners .....	64	62
Average annual expenditures.....	\$51,299	\$50,782
Food.....	6,600	6,374
Food at home .....	3,949	3,826
Cereals and bakery products .....	541	518
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....	854	839
Dairy products .....	416	330
Fruits and vegetables .....	741	815
Other food at home .....	1,397	1,323
Food away from home .....	2,651	2,548
Alcoholic beverages.....	448	401
Housing.....	17,030	16,975
Shelter.....	9,986	9,828
Owned dwellings .....	6,082	5,745
Rented dwellings .....	3,255	3,478
Other lodging .....	649	605
Utilities, fuels, and public services .....	3,693	3,983
Household operations .....	1,152	1,187
Housekeeping supplies.....	627	535
Household furnishings and equipment.....	1,571	1,443
Apparel and services .....	1,677	1,856
Transportation.....	9,001	8,682
Vehicle purchases (net outlay).....	3,241	3,193
Gasoline and motor oil .....	2,683	3,025
Other vehicle expenses .....	2,537	2,018
Public transportation .....	540	446
Healthcare .....	3,594	3,147
Entertainment .....	2,553	2,204
Personal care products and services.....	618	615
Reading .....	106	78
Education.....	1,172	1,642

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Consumer unit characteristics and average annual expenditures, United States and Atlanta, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2012-2013 - Continued**

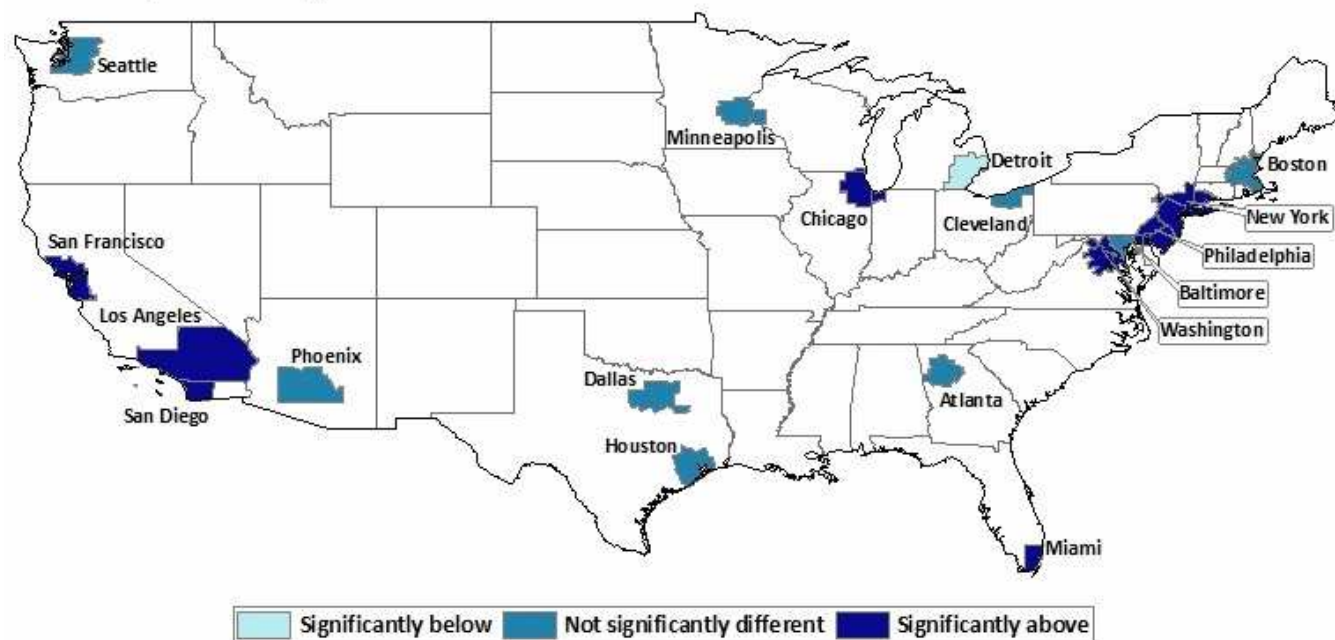
Category	United States	Atlanta
Tobacco products and smoking supplies .....	331	175
Miscellaneous .....	736	514
Cash contributions .....	1,873	1,932
Personal insurance and pensions.....	5,559	6,187
Life and other personal insurance.....	336	350
Pensions and Social Security .....	5,224	5,837

**Table 3. Percent share of average annual expenditures for housing, transportation, and food, United States and 18 metropolitan areas, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2012-13**

Area	Housing	Transportation	Food
United States .....	33.2	17.5	12.9
Atlanta .....	33.4	17.1	12.6
Baltimore .....	32.5	15.5	11.0*
Boston .....	32.6	15.6*	13.3
Chicago .....	35.4*	15.6*	12.7
Cleveland .....	31.6	18.2	12.8
Dallas .....	33.5	17.9	12.6
Detroit .....	30.0*	19.7*	13.5
Houston .....	33.1	21.0*	12.0
Los Angeles .....	38.2*	15.4*	13.4
Miami .....	39.9*	16.2	14.0
Minneapolis .....	32.0	18.3	11.3*
New York .....	39.8*	13.5*	11.9*
Philadelphia .....	35.4*	15.4*	13.7
Phoenix .....	34.8	18.9	13.6
San Diego .....	38.2*	15.8	11.5*
San Francisco .....	35.8*	13.7*	11.9*
Seattle .....	33.4	15.6	13.0
Washington .....	35.3*	16.7	10.9*

Note: An asterisk (\*) represents a statistically significant difference from the U.S. average at the 95-percent confidence level.

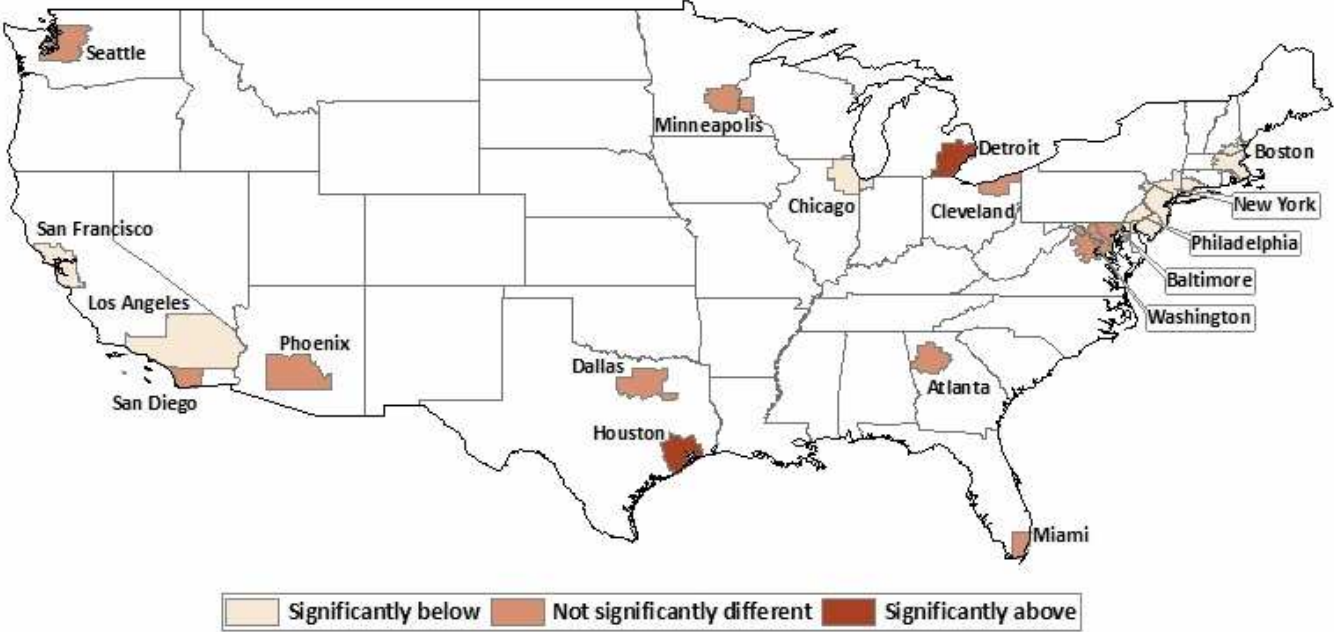
**Chart 2. Expenditure shares spent on housing in 18 metropolitan statistical areas compared to the U.S. average, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2012-2013**



Note: Statistical significance testing at the 95-percent confidence interval.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Chart 3. Expenditure shares spent on transportation in 18 metropolitan statistical areas compared to the U.S. average, Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2012-2013



Note: Statistical significance testing at the 95-percent confidence interval.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.